

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the final Office Action dated August 11, 2004. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the Office Action are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 5-15 and 32 are pending. Claims 1, 5, 6, 10-12 and 32 have been amended. Support for the claim changes can be found in the original disclosure, and therefore no new matter has been added. Claims 1, 6 and 32 are in independent form.

Claim 32 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 1-3, 6-10, 15 and 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,263,250 (*Nishiwaki et al.*). Claims 5 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Nishiwaki et al.* Claims 12 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Nishiwaki et al.* in view of Japanese Patent Publication JP 2-187346 (*JP '346*). Claim 14 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Nishiwaki et al.* in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,548,894 (*Muto*).

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the courtesy of conducting a further interview, by telephone, with Applicants' undersigned representative on October 12, 2004. During the interview, the Examiner indicated that he believed that the amendments to the independent claims presented at the interview would place the subject application in condition for allowance. The additional changes to the claims made in the instant Amendment are not believed to affect the patentability of the claims.

Applicants submit that this Amendment After Final Rejection clearly places the subject application in condition for allowance. This Amendment was not presented earlier, because Applicants believed (in view of the agreement reached at the previous interview, conducted on May 4, 2004) that the prior Amendment placed the subject application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, entry of the instant Amendment, as an earnest attempt to advance prosecution and reduce the number of issues, is requested under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

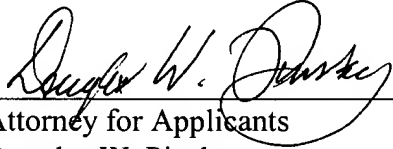
STATEMENT OF SUBSTANCE OF INTERVIEW

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended to Applicants' undersigned representative during the telephone interview conducted on October 12, 2004.

In the interview, Applicants' attorney and the Examiner discussed proposed amendments to the independent claims (Claims 1, 6 and 32) (the proposed amendments are attached to the Interview Summary). The Examiner indicated that the proposed amendments appear to overcome the prior art of record. The Examiner requested that Applicants present the proposed amendments formally, and the Examiner indicated that he would then perform an updated search.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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